THE JOKER IS BACK—AND IT ALL STARTS HERE!

BATMAN

7

13+ TEEN

ALL IN

FEATURING
A STUNNING FOLDOUT SEQUENCE!

FRACTION
JIMÉNEZ
MOREY

WRITTEN BY EISNER AWARD WINNER GREG RUCKA • ART BY DaNi

NEXT LEVEL

MARCH

BATWOMAN #1

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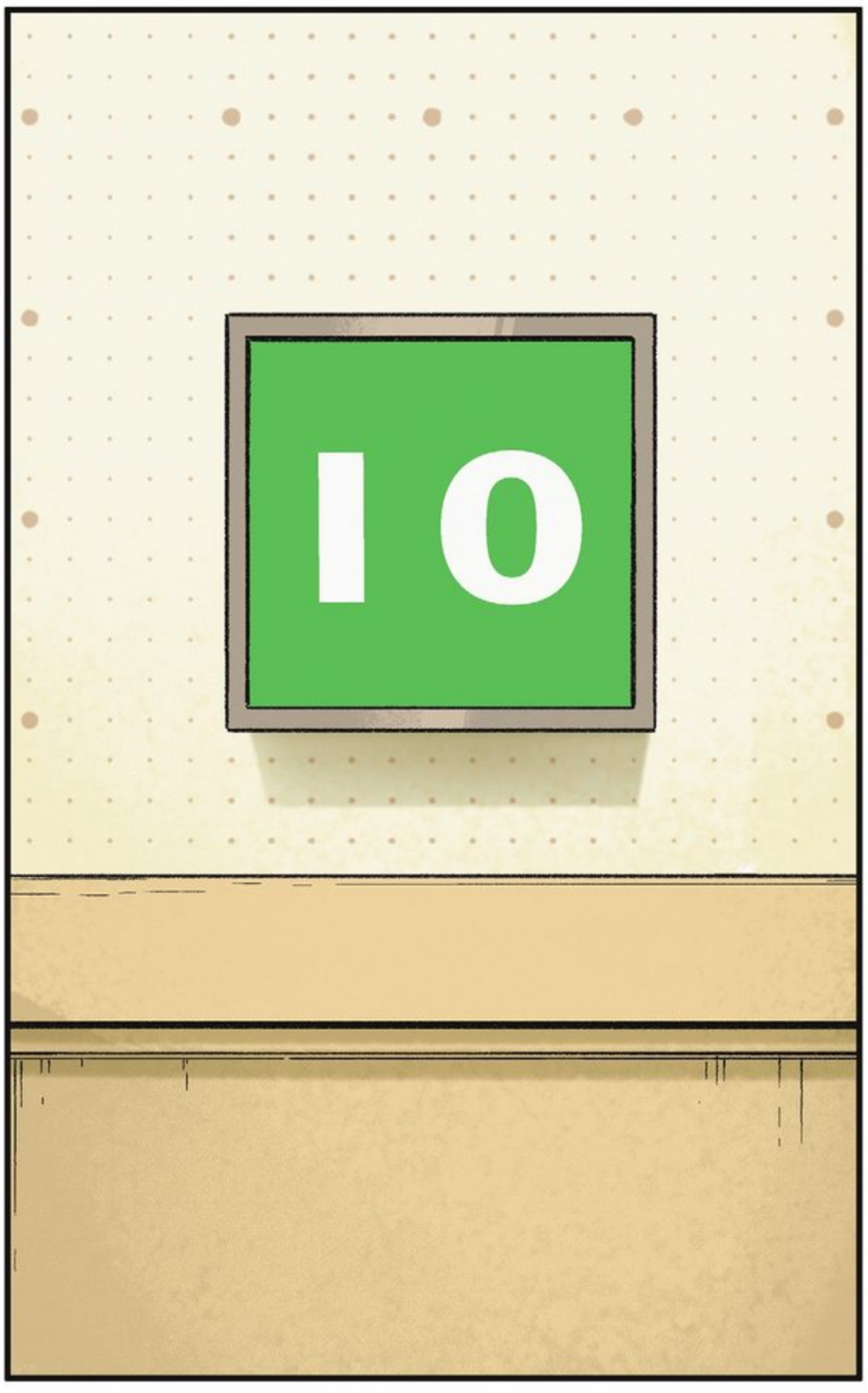
DAUGHTER. SISTER. SOLDIER. HERO.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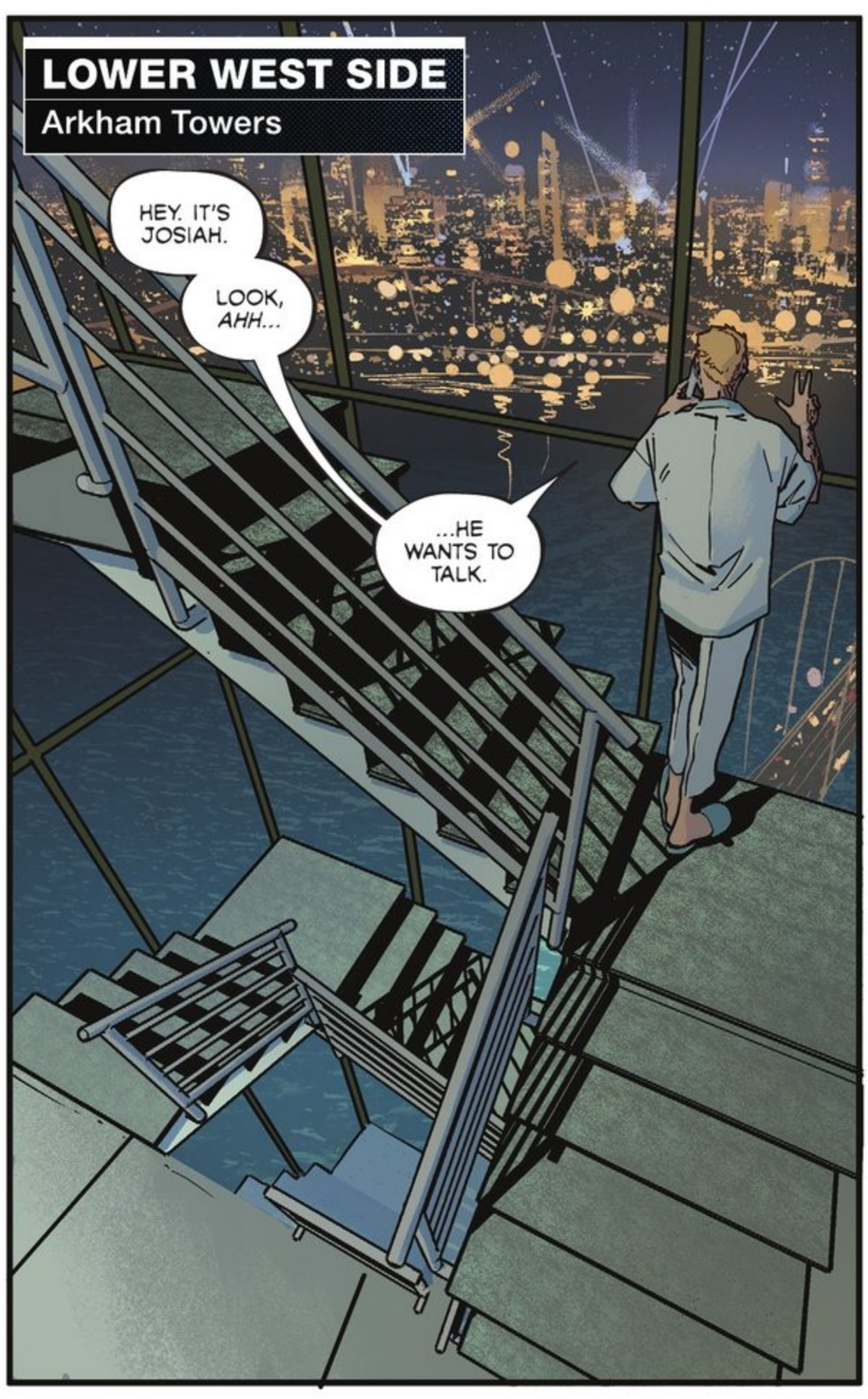
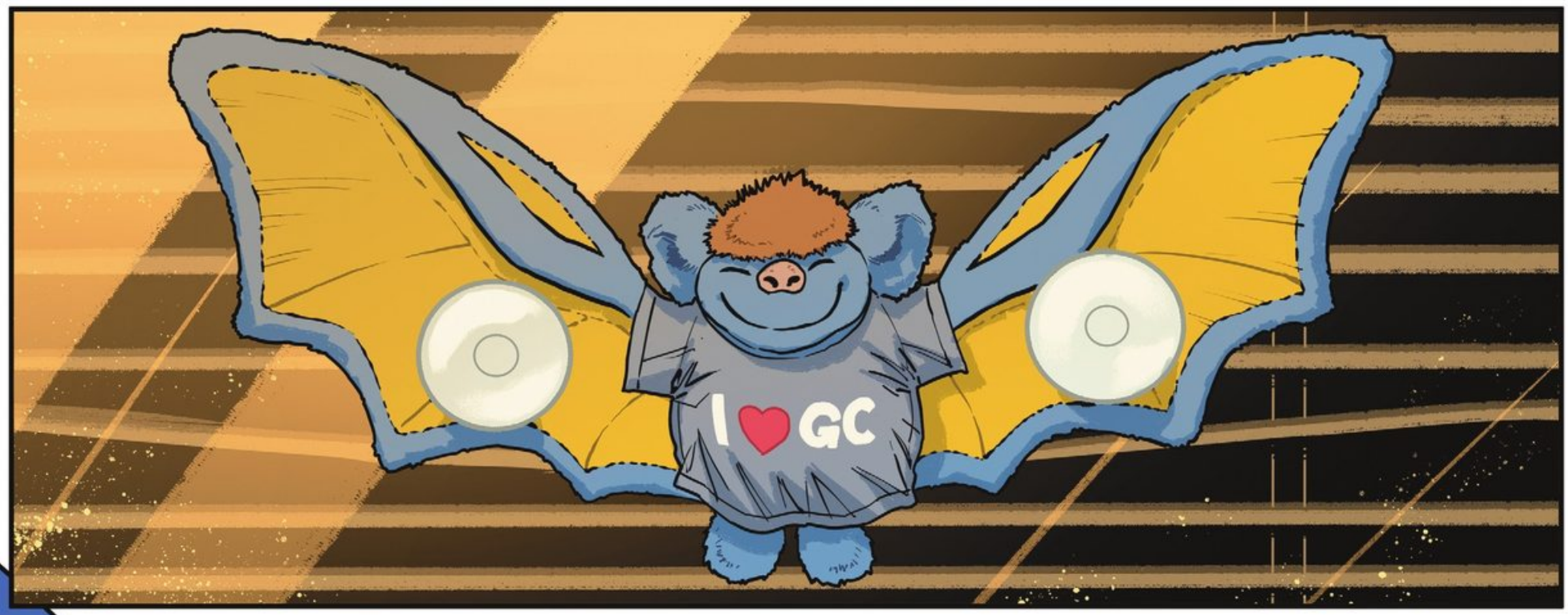

LOWER WEST SIDE
Arkham Towers
HEY. IT'S JOSIAH.
LOOK, AHH...
...HE WANTS TO TALK.


I ♥ GC

ALLEYTOWN
Bullock Investigations

WELL?

TSK

GOT SOMETHING FOR YOU.

JUST YOU, AND, *UH--*

--LOOK, I GOT A GUY.

TRUSTED SOURCE. AND HE, *UH--*

SAY IT, BULLOCK.

IT'S *HIM.*

HE WANTS TO *TALK...*

POLICE

DC COMICS PROUDLY PRESENTS

7

BATMAN
KILL SWITCH

MATT FRACTION WRITER
JORGE JIMÉNEZ ARTIST AND COVER

TOMEU MOREY COLORS
CLAYTON COWLES with
JORGE JIMÉNEZ LETTERS

DUSTIN NGUYEN;
JORGE MOLINA; RYAN SOOK;
DAVID AJA; LEIRIX VARIANT COVERS

JESSICA BERBEY ASSOCIATE EDITOR
ROB LEVIN EDITOR

BATMAN CREATED BY **BOB KANE**
WITH **BILL FINGER**

THE AVERAGE BRAIN USES LESS THAN 500 CALORIES A DAY AND GENERATES AROUND 12 WATTS OF ELECTRICITY.

HIS BURNED THROUGH 8,000 CALORIES AND COULD LIGHT A ***CHRISTMAS TREE*** BEFORE ***TREATMENT.***

PATIENT TEN HAS BEEN MEDICALLY IMMOBILIZED AND MECHANICALLY ***PITHED.***

I MANAGE THE ***HYPER-BIOELECTRIC ACTIVITY*** IN HIS MIND THROUGH THE CROWN OF STORMS.

HE'S ISOLATED IN A ***FLOAT TANK.*** INTUBATED FOR NUTRIENTS AND OXYGEN.

CRANIAL IMPLANTS CONVERT HIS THOUGHTS TO SPEECH AND TRANSMIT EXTERNAL SOUND TO HIM IN REAL TIME.

I WAS EXCITED WHEN HE MENTIONED A DESIRE TO SPEAK WITH SOMEONE OUTSIDE OF HIS CARE TEAM.

I DIDN'T KNOW HE MEANT ***YOU.*** IF HE'D ***ASKED...***

...I WOULDN'T HAVE ALLOWED IT.

THAT'S WHY HE DIDN'T ASK.

THAT'S NOT THE WAY HIS MIND WORKS.

I THINK YOU'D BE SURPRISED BY HOW HIS MIND WORKS IF YOU COULD BE BOTHERED TO LEARN.

10

FOLLOW THE GREEN TILES. THE RED ONES ADMINISTER A MEDICALLY INCAPACITATING LOAD OF ELECTRICITY.

AND TAKE YOUR SHOES AND SOCKS OFF.

NOW.

THESE PROTOCOLS ARE DESIGNED TO KEEP EVERYONE IN ***ROOM TEN*** SAFE:

US FROM ***HIM***...AND HIM FROM ***US.***

IF YOU DEVIATE FROM A ***GREEN*** TILE-- ZAP.

WALL SENSORS EXTEND THAT BOUNDARY INTO 3D SPACE. YOUR PROXIMITY TO PATIENT TEN WILL BE CONTROLLED AT ALL TIMES.

ANY PART OF YOU LEAVES THE PATH--

THEN "ZAP."

I UNDERSTAND, DOCTOR.

I'LL BE RIGHT ***HERE*** THE WHOLE TIME, WATCHING AND LISTENING TO EVERYTHING.

IF I SUSPECT EVEN FOR A MOMENT YOU MEAN TO PHYSICALLY INTERACT WITH MY PATIENT...

...MY THUMB COMES OFF THE ***KILL SWITCH.***

THE FLOOR DISCHARGES AND ROOM TEN TURNS INTO A TOTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ***VACUUM.***

YOUR ORGANS WILL BURST--RAPID HYPOXIA, HYPOXEMIA, AND ***BRAIN DEATH*** ENSUE.

I WILL ***NOT*** ALLOW YOU TO HARM A PATIENT IN MY CARE.

I UNDERSTAND, DR. ZELLER.

I'M READY.

Click

STILLING HIM HAS CAUSED SOME SECONDARY PHYSICAL EFFECTS, BATMAN, SO, NO...

...I DON'T THINK YOU ARE.

GOOD LORD.

HEY, YOU.

HH.

WELL?

HOW DID YOU *DO IT*, JOKER?

PLEASE REFER TO HIM AS *PATIENT* TEN--

I'M NOT GOING TO CALL HIM THAT.

SOMEONE MANAGED TO CONTACT ME FROM INSIDE OF YOUR BESPOKE *PRISON*, DR. ZELLER.

HE'S STILL *THE JOKER.*

I DON'T WANT TO SAY.

YOUR PERFECT JOKER PRISON IS ALREADY COMPROMISED, DOCTOR.

HE HAS *PEOPLE* INSIDE *ARKHAM TOWERS.*

*SUSPEND AND SECURE **EVERYONE** THAT'S HAD ACCESS TO FLOOR TEN AND ROOM TEN.*

KNOWING HIM, THAT WILL BE THE PERSON HE WANTS YOU TO FIND.

THERE WILL BE *OTHERS* THAT YOU WON'T.

WE'RE DONE HERE.

WAIT.

PLEASE.

I'LL TELL YOU.

BANG

HIS NAME IS JOSIAH JONES. HE'S AN ORDERLY.

HE USED TO BE A POLICEMAN.

THAT WAS WHEN WE MET.

AND THEN HE WASN'T A POLICEMAN ANYMORE.

JOSIAH'S TRAINING AS AN OFFICER AND THE CHALLENGES FACED IN HIS OWN RECOVERY MADE HIM AN IDEAL HIRE, DR. ZELLER.

PLEASE DO NOT PUNISH HIM FOR HELPING ME.

MAYBE HE CAME HERE TO HELP OTHERS LIKE HIM.

MAYBE THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE THAT WOULD HIRE SOMEONE THAT LOOKS AS HE DOES NOW.

THE WORLD IS CAPRICIOUS AND CRUEL TO THE DIFFERENT.

OR MAYBE JOSIAH WAS BIDING HIS TIME UNTIL I FINALLY ARRIVED AND HE'D TRY TO KILL ME.

I DON'T KNOW.

MAYBE JOSIAH DIDN'T KNOW, HIMSELF.

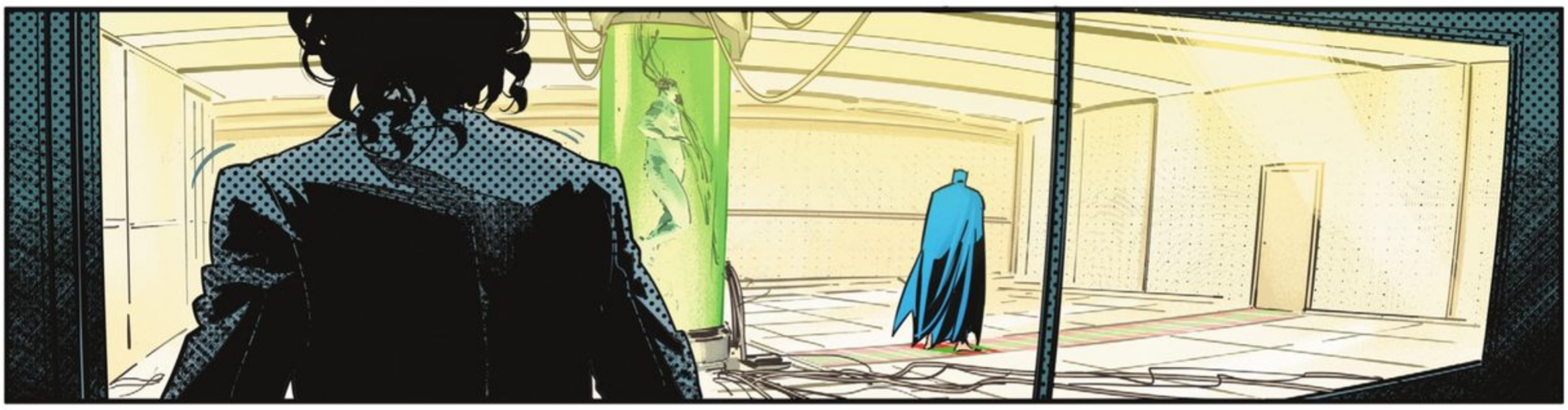
RAGE CAN DO STRANGE THINGS TO THE MIND.

WHATEVER IT WAS THAT BROUGHT HIM INTO ROOM TEN VANISHED WHEN HE SAW ME.

HE COMES BY ON HIS ROUNDS SOME NIGHTS AND WE TALK.

I ASKED HIM TO REACH OUT TO SOME OF OUR MUTUAL ACQUAINTANCES TO CONTACT YOU.

AND NOW HERE YOU ARE.



ANYWAY, I THINK THAT'S HOW IT HAPPENED.

IT'S HARD TO TELL SOMETIMES.

IS *THAT* THE GAG, JOKER?
YOU CAN'T REMEMBER ALL THE HORRIBLE THINGS YOU'VE DONE ANYMORE?
THAT MONSTER WAS SOMEONE ELSE, FROM SOME *OTHER* LIFE?

ON THE CONTRARY, BATMAN...

I REMEMBER.

HAHA
BOOOO
BOOO

I REMEMBER EVERYTHING.

I.

IT'S.

I.

I CAN'T TELL THEM APART. MEMORIES AND DREAMS.

AND ALL MY DREAMS ARE NIGHTMARES.

I CAN'T EXPLAIN WHAT GIFTS DR. ZELLER AND HER REMARKABLE DEVICE HAVE BEEN.

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO HAVE SOME SORT OF CLARITY OF THOUGHT AFTER ALL THOSE YEARS.

ADRIFT ON A RELENTLESSLY CHURNING SEA.

SHE NAMED IT AFTER THE OCEAN OF STORMS ON THE MOON-- DID SHE TELL YOU THAT?

PERHAPS THIS IS HER STORY TO TELL.

SHE'S A REMARKABLE PERSON, BATMAN.

I HOPE YOU GET TO KNOW HER.

I KNOW IT WAS ME.

I KNOW WHAT I'VE DONE. WHAT I AM.

I AM MONSTROUS AND CRUEL AND VIOLENT.

AND.

AND I AM THANKFUL TO BE CONTAINED.

=SIGH=

"THE DEVIL'S BACK IN HIS HOLE."

THE OPENING GAMBIT AT LAST.

RIGHT?

THAT'S THE PLAY.

I BEG YOUR PARDON?

YOU'RE ALL *DONE* WITH GAMES AND PLANS AND TRAPS, NOW THAT DR. ZELLER'S MIRACLE DEVICE HAS SHOWN YOU THE WAY.

AND SINCE YOUR TREATMENT HAS BEEN SO SUCCESSFUL...

...WHY NOT TAKE THE *NEEDLES* OUT OF YOUR SPINE, MAYBE GET THE TUBES OUT OF YOU, LET YOU WALK AROUND A LITTLE BIT?

COME ON.

HE'S WASTING MY TIME.

CLEAR A PATH TO THE DOOR FOR ME *NOW.*

YOU MUST NEVER ALLOW ME TO LEAVE THIS CONTAINER UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

EVEN IF I CONVINCE HER.

I KNOW YOU WILL NEVER BE FOOLED.

I ASKED TO SEE YOU FOR TWO REASONS.

THE SECOND REASON IS A SECRET.

GREAT. LOVE SECRETS.

WHAT'S THE *FIRST?*

THIS MAY BE EMPATHY.

I'M UNSURE.

I THINK YOU'RE LONELY.

I THINK YOU NEED A FRIEND.

HH.

DO I, NOW.

FSSSHH--

I KNOW I DO.

MY CEASELESS COMPULSIONS. MONOMANIA. MEGALOMANIA. THE OBSESSIVE DRIVE TO CONTROL AND MANIPULATE EVERY DETAIL OF EVERY DAY.

IT WAS EXHAUSTING.

YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE THAT SAW THE EFFORT.

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE THAT EVER UNDERSTOOD.

MAYBE I WAS THE ONLY ONE THAT EVER UNDERSTOOD YOU, TOO.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT I REMEMBER FEELING
MOST OF ALL BEFORE I CAME TO RESIDE HERE?

MY CONSTANT COMPANION THROUGH ALL THE KILLING
AND PLANNING AND TORTURE AND MAYHEM AND RAGE.

LONELY,
BATMAN.

ENDLESSLY,
CEASELESSLY
LONELY.

I'M ALONE, JOKER.

NOT LONELY.

TWO DIFFERENT THINGS.

I CAN TELL THE DIFFERENCE.

YES.

OF COURSE.

I USED TO TELL MYSELF THE SAME THING.

ALL RIGHT, GENTLEMEN-- WE SHOULD END OUR TIME TOGETHER HERE.

I'M ACTIVATING THE EGRESS PATH NOW, BATMAN.

MIND YOUR, AH--CAPE.

IT LOOKS LIKE IT GETS PRETTY SWOOSHY AND THE SPATIAL MONITORS ARE UNFORGIVING.

DR. ZELLER.

A FAVOR.

I'M LISTENING.

I REALLY DID HAVE TWO REASONS FOR WISHING TO SPEAK WITH HIM TODAY.

AND I CAN TELL HIM THE SECRET ONE.

BUT I CAN'T TELL ***YOU.***

THAT'S...

I'M YOUR THERAPIST. UNLESS YOU'RE GOING TO HARM ANYONE OR YOURSELF OR--

YES, DOCTOR, I UNDERSTAND DOCTOR-PATIENT CONFIDENTIALITY.

THIS IS MORE A MATTER OF THE KIND OF CONFIDENTIALITY THAT EXISTS BETWEEN...

WELL.

WHATEVER IT IS THAT HE AND I ARE.

WHY DO I FEEL LIKE I'M BEING MANIPULATED, PATIENT TEN?

BECAUSE I'M TRYING TO MANIPULATE YOU INTO GIVING ME SOMETHING I WANT, OF COURSE.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO STOP WATCHING. BUT I NEED YOU TO PROMISE TO STOP LISTENING.

ONLY FOR A MOMENT.

...

THIRTY SECONDS.

DON'T ***STUTTER.***

CLICK!

TICK-TOCK.

YOU WERE CORRECT, OF COURSE.

I HEAR ALL KINDS OF THINGS FROM ALL OF GOTHAM'S DARKEST PLACES. I COULDN'T IGNORE THEM IF I TRIED.

AND I'VE HEARD SOMETHING DANGEROUS IS IN THE OFFING.

...

AND?

I CANNOT ASCERTAIN ANYTHING MORE THAN THE FAINTEST HINT OF ITS EXISTENCE.

BUT IT REMAINS BEYOND MY REACH.

THAT ALONE MAKES IT INTERESTING TO ME.

"SOMETHING DANGEROUS IS HAPPENING IN GOTHAM CITY"?

GREAT TIP, "PATIENT TEN." GOOD NIGHT.

SOMEONE'S COMING TO KILL YOU.

I DON'T KNOW WHO AND I CAN'T STOP IT.

I'M *BATMAN.*

PEOPLE TRY TO KILL ME ALL THE TIME. YOU'VE DISCOVERED IT'S *TUESDAY.*

NO.

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.

SOMEONE'S COMING TO KILL YOU.

BRUCE.

YOU LOOK MUCH BETTER TODAY.

HOPEFULLY THE *PAIN* HAS PASSED?

It will *never* pass.

THEN WE MUST LEARN HOW TO *MANAGE* IT. LEARN HOW TO KEEP IT FROM *CONSUMING* YOU.

I'D LIKE TO HELP YOU WITH THAT.

YOU THINK IT'S A *CHOICE.*

IT *ISN'T.* WE *NEVER* HAD A CHOICE.

Never.

TELL ME ABOUT THE LAST TIME YOU SAW YOUR SISTER.

KAW!

KAW!

BATWOMAN

#1 PREVIEW

WRITER GREG RUCKA
ARTIST DANI
COLORS MATT HOLLINGSWORTH
LETTERS HASSAN OTSMANE-ELHAOU

"I didn't know I was to have a party at all...

"...but if there is to be one, I think I ought to invite the guests."

BETH-- DON'T, DON'T DO IT--

"How am I to stop it?"

--YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS...

...please...

...Beth, it's me...

...it's Kate.

"...and the twice-named shall perish, and the age of Darkseid will come..."

...it is written, it will be...

...Alice and Batwoman...

...Beth and Kate...

...HOW DO WE FIGHT THE *DEVIL* WHEN THE DEVIL IS *REAL?*

WITH *EVERY-THING.*

TO BE CONTINUED IN
BATWOMAN #1
ON SALE IN MARCH!

DC NEXT LEVEL

ALL IN

ABSOLUTE SUPERMAN

COLLECTED EDITION AVAILABLE IN MARCH

VOL. 2: SON OF THE DEMON

THE MAN OF STEEL FACES THE DEMON WITHIN.

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Written by **JASON AARON**

Art by **RAFA SANDOVAL and CARMINE DI GIANDOMENICO**

Cover art by **RAFA SANDOVAL**

THE MATRIARCH

INTERVIEW WITH TOM KING

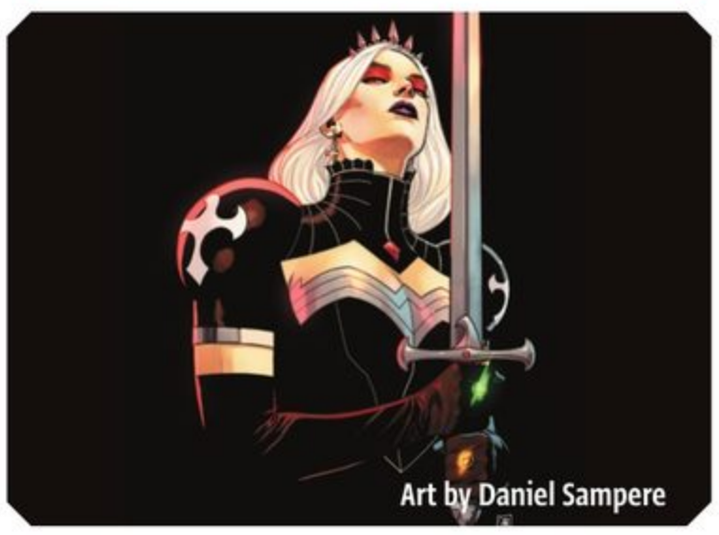
The Matriarch has arrived in the pages of *Wonder Woman*, and she's here to change everything. Superstar writer Tom King reveals Diana's most ambitious villain yet, a royal force of nature with power to topple gods and heroes alike. As "The Wonder War" begins, this future-born conqueror promises an epic showdown that will redefine the Amazing Amazon's legacy.

What can you tell us about the creation of the Matriarch?

From the beginning my brilliant artist, Daniel Sampere, and I wanted to create a huge *Wonder Woman* villain that would be the focus of our arc. We very cleverly put her origin story on the very first page of the series, and nobody noticed, which was fun! We took 25 issues of story leading up to the launch of this character who is the pivotal villain of the whole series, and her name is the Matriarch.

Can you share a bit about the character's design?

Daniel's design is perfect. I wanted her to look like an evil princess, or to have that sort of royalty to her. This look of "I've inherited the world and I can do anything."



Art by Daniel Sampere

How do you craft a villain worthy of Wonder Woman's legacy?

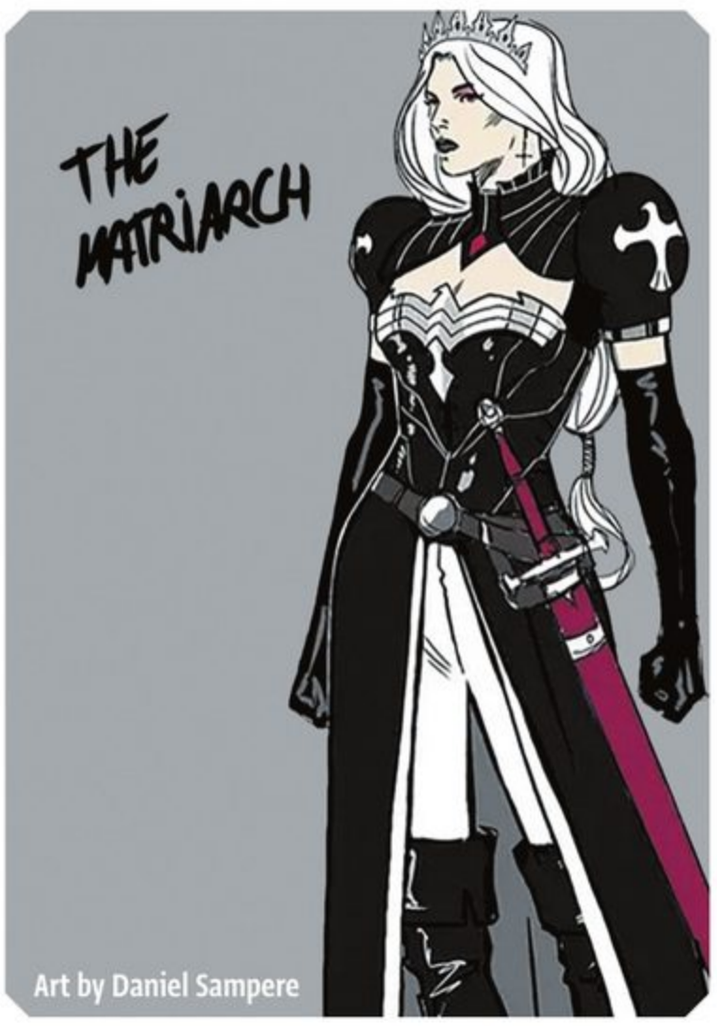
It's my chance to do a Lex Luthor. My chance to do a Joker. That's who the Matriarch is. People who are reading *Wonder Woman* today need an experience as big as the people who were reading *Batman* in the '30s or '40s. They deserve huge comics that aren't just looking backward, but looking forward.

Art by Jorge Fornés

What you started to see in issue #25, the big launch of this character, is she exists in the future. I was sort of inspired by the comics of my youth, where the great villains came from the future. In the future, she has left Themyscira, has conquered Earth, and has killed the Justice League. When you see each of their deaths, their last words to the Matriarch before they succumb to her total power are "Wonder Woman," who's the last hope against this villain.

What can fans expect as we head toward "The Wonder War"?

There's a lot more to come. We've been building on this. We created this character called the Sovereign, who may or may not be her father. You see her birth and the birth of Trinity around the same time. These two babies who start together becoming the greatest of adversaries in the future will be the driving force behind the comic. I couldn't be more excited for where this is going.



Art by Daniel Sampere

DON'T MISS THE EPIC START OF "THE WONDER WAR" IN *WONDER WOMAN* #31, ON SALE IN MARCH!

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